

Raising New Units for the Late Roman Army: *Auxilia Palatina*

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During the mid–third century, Rome’s defenses broke down on all fronts. Diocletian and Maximian (285–305) rebuilt them by strengthening the elite field forces. On the Danube and in the East, Diocletian perfected the traditional system of picked legionary drafts—the palatine legions¹—while in the West, Maximian and his Caesar Constantius raised a new class of troops, the Germanic *auxilia palatina*.²

A hundred years later, in the lists of the Notitia Dignitatum, the *auxilia palatina* still loom as the bulk of the imperial field armies. Yet their origins remain somewhat in the dark. Ethnic units had been part of the Roman army for hundreds of years. Scholars therefore argued that some *auxilia palatina* were raised long before Maximian’s time, and that he thus did not create a new class of troops.³ This seems wrong. Fortunately, the Notitia Dignatatum lists units roughly in the order in which they were raised so that a study of three of the earliest *auxilia palatina* may shed some light on the beginnings of this class of troops as a whole and also on its role in underpinning the empire.

I. REGII

The late Roman graveyard at Concordia (Portogruaro) in northern Italy has yielded more than two hundred forty stone coffins (*arcae*) from the end of the fourth century. Of one hundred inscriptions, no fewer than thirty-seven mention military units. Among

¹On elite legionary detachments: E. Ritterling, “Legio,” *RE* 12:1211–1829, esp. 1353, 1357ff; D. Hoffmann, *Das spätömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignatatum* (Düsseldorf, 1969), 173ff and 209ff. Hoffmann takes too many of the *legiones palatinæ* to be new formations; they are, in many cases, praetorian and legionary detachments: see M. P. Speidel, *Roman Army Studies*, I–II, Mavors 1 and 8 (Amsterdam, 1984; Stuttgart, 1992), 414–18. For legionary detachments in Arabia under Diocletian, see idem, *Roman Army Studies*, II, 377f, with the correction that the *praetensio* stretched only from Bostra to Azraq as shown by C. Zuckerman, “Aur. Valerianus (293/305) et F. Severinus (333), commandants en Arabie et la forteresse d’Azraq,” *Antiquité Tardive* 2 (1994), 83–88. I thank Roger Tomlin of Oxford for his kind help on this matter.

²Julian, *Or.* 1.34Cff. Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 131ff. Whether the field-army *auxilia* were called *palatina* from the beginning is unknown: see Hoffmann, *ibid.*, 172f and 396ff. Only the Notitia Dignatatum (about A.D. 400) calls them so, but the term *palatina* is used for guard units even before Constantine: W. Ensslin, “Palatini,” *RE* 18:2529–60, esp. 2531; Speidel, *Roman Army*, II, 387.

³C. Zuckerman, “Les ‘Barbares’ romains: au sujet de l’origine des *auxilia tétrarchiques*,” in *L’armée romaine et les barbares du III^e au VII^e siècle*, ed. F. Vallet and M. Kazanski (Paris, 1993), 17–29.

them is the inscription on the coffin of Flavia Optata (Fig. 1), which has played a great role in the discussion about the origin of the Regii regiment. It reads as follows:⁴

FLAVIA OPTATA MILI DE
NUM REGI EME SIV DE
R V SI QUI POS OVIT
ME ARC VOLU AP ENFE
R VI AUR LIB VNA.

As for the letters EME SIV DE R V, Theodor Mommsen suggested that they refer to a regiment of Jews from Emesa (Homs) in Syria. He read *Emes(enorum) Iud(a)eoru(m)*, incorrectly putting an *O* into the text as a prop for his reading. Mommsen cast such a spell that later editors of the inscription embraced his mistake in their own readings. Indeed, scholars build inverted pyramids on Mommsen's reading, tracing the unit's history as far back as the mid–third century. Yet Rome never raised regular army units from Jews, let alone elite ones—only penal gangs to be wasted in hunting down robbers under evil skies, as Tacitus says. Mommsen's reading thus is a truly astonishing mistake.⁵

There can be no doubt that the letters EME SIV DE R V meant *emi(t) sib(i) de r(e) v(iri)* (she bought it for herself from her husband's money). In twenty-seven of thirty-seven cases, military owners of coffins from this graveyard state that they bought the coffin with their own money (*arcam emit sibi de proprio*), hence Optata, too, is likely to have done so. The oddities of her spelling and wording parallel other Concordia coffins: *sivi* for *sibi*, *eme* for *emit*, and the phrase *de rem sua*.⁶ The inscription thus reads:

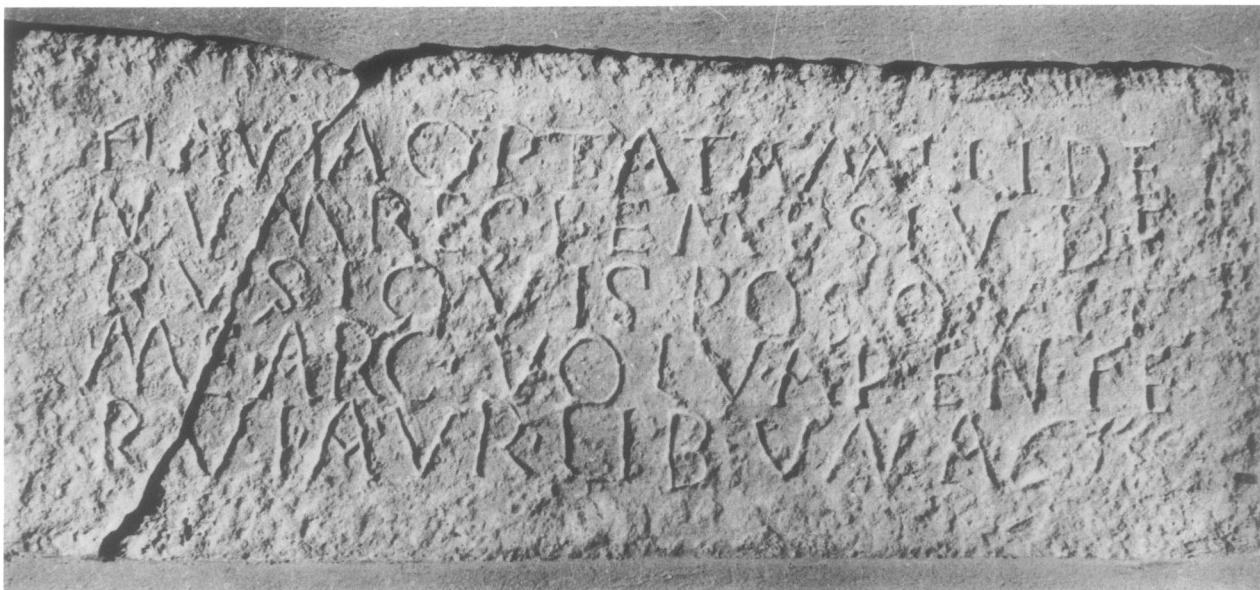
*Flavia Optata, mili(tis) de
num(ero) Regi(orum), emi(t) sib(i) de
r(e) v(iri). Si quis pos(t) obit(um)
me(um) arc(am) volu(erit) ap(erire) infe-
r(at) (fisci) vi(ribus) aur(i) lib(ram) una(m).*

Flavia Optata, (wife) of a soldier
of the Regii unit, bought (this) for herself from
her husband's means. If anyone after my death
opens the coffin, he shall pay
the fisc one pound of gold.

⁴See D. Hoffmann, "Die spätromischen Soldatengrabschriften von Concordia," *MusHel* 20 (1963), 22–57; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 61–116 (with literature). See also, G. Lettich, *Le iscrizioni sepolcrali tardoantiche di Concordia* (Trieste, 1983), and, for the army, R. Tomlin, "Seniores-Juniores in the Late-Roman Field Army," *AJP* 93 (1972), 253–78, esp. 270. On Optata, see CIL 5.8764; *ILCV* 4857; Hoffmann, "Die spätromischen Soldatengrabschriften," 36; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 68 and 78; Lettich, *Le iscrizioni*, 57; Tomlin, "Seniores-Juniores," 270f.

⁵Mommsen: CIL 5.8764; for other editors, see note 4; for scholars, see S. Applebaum, "Jews and Service in the Roman Army," in *Roman Frontier Studies*, 1967 (Tel Aviv, 1971), 181–84, where Flavia Optata is a "mysterious and martial Jewess"; Zuckerman, "Les 'Barbares' romains," 17–29. Zuckerman's claim (p. 19) that Hoffmann assigned a late date to the "Royal Jews" so as not to contaminate the ranks of Germanic *auxilia* is in bad taste. See also, D. Woods, "A Note concerning the Regii Emeseni Iudei," *Latomus* 51 (1992), 404–7. On Rome taking a dim view of Jews: Suetonius, *Aug.* 93; Tacitus; *Hist.* 5.5; Eusebius *VC* 3.18; see T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 252; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 94. On penal gangs, see Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.85; Suetonius, *Tib.* 36.

⁶These oddities are regular vulgarisms of late Latin. *De rem sua*: CIL 5.8757, *ILCV* 521. *Vir* is traditionally abbreviated to *v.* in phrases such as *v(ir) e(gregius)* etc. If line 3 began with a *P*, traces of which may still be preserved, one would have to read *de pr(oprio) v(iri)*, as in *ILS* 2783.



1 Flavia Optata's inscription from Portogruaro

The Regii thus did not come from Emesa and were not Jews. Perhaps the true origin of the unit is not hard to find. The *Epitome de Caesaribus* (41.3) tells how in 306 Constantine became emperor when his father, Constantius, died in York: *Quo mortuo cunctis qui aderant annitentibus, sed praecipue Croco Alamannorum rege, auxiliis gratia Constantium comitato, imperium capit.* Crocus, the main mover in Constantine's rise to the throne, clearly had been the outstanding king in Constantius' field army. His warriors, therefore, could simply be called Regii, "the king's men," without any need to say which king's. As auxiliary household troops, Crocus' men surely were the *auxilium palatinum* of the Regii. The term *regii*, for auxiliaries led by a king, was technical; under Augustus, troopers of the Thracian king Rhoemetalces were so called.⁷

As an *auxilium*, Crocus' troops were mainly foot soldiers, and, for their leader to act as kingmaker in 306, they must by then have served several years—long enough to become a standing unit of the Roman army. This makes it likely that Constantius raised them during a well-known incident in 298/9. In the winter of that year, a host of Alamanne infantry was crossing the frozen Rhine. When the ice suddenly broke, they became trapped on an island, whereupon Constantius sent the river fleet to besiege them. To come to terms, they had to hand over a number of warriors as recruits for the Roman army. These were not "captives" (as the panegyric claims), but rather treaty-bound allies, for the troops chose among themselves who had to go. Worsted tribes often picked among themselves the warriors they were required to contribute to the Roman army; it was in Rome's interest to enroll men who liked to serve, who were least needed

⁷For Crocus, see M. Bang, *Die Germanen im römischen Dienst* (Berlin, 1906), 62f; for Crocus' name, see Gregor Tur. 1.32, 34. For guard units in York at Constantine's proclamation, see Eusebius, *VC* 1.22; regarding all units, see Julian, *Or.* 1.7D. On armies creating emperors, see Lactantius, *De Mort.* 19, with commentary by J. L. Creed, *Lactantius De Mortibus Persecutorum* (Oxford, 1984), 99f (also Eusebius, *VC* 4.68). On Rhoemetalces, see Velleius Paternius 2.112: *quippe magnam Thracum manum iunctus praedictis ducibus Rhoemetalces, Thracie rex, in adiutorium eius belli secum trahebat—fugata regiorum equestris acies.*

at home, and who were therefore least likely to desert. Bound to each other by tribal ties of trust, an Alamannic king and his followers were likely to have stayed together when giving themselves up for service in the Roman army. Zosimus, in slighting Constantine's field army as made up of barbarian prisoners of war, had perhaps the Regii in mind.⁸

Foreign prisoners of war widely served as imperial guards during the fourth century, and were often frowned upon as was the case of the Carpi of Maximinus Daia's bodyguard. Moreover, a tale told by Ammianus Marcellinus shows that it was not at all odd for Constantius to turn river prisoners into guardsmen. In 357 Caesar Julian had trapped a band of Frankish raiders in a fort on the Meuse River. To forestall their flight, the Roman fleet broke up the ice around them every day. In the end, when the Franks gave themselves up, Julian sent them to Constantius II for enrollment in the guard.⁹

The Regii, then, may have been Alamanni, and for some time their unit may have been kept up to strength with Alamannic recruits. Even new kings could have come to lead the unit. In 372, an Alamannic king, likewise, held the tribunate of an Alamannic unit in Britain. Whether or not still recruited from Alamanni, in the Battle of Strasburg in 357, the Regii fiercely fought Alamanni tribesmen. Germans in the service of Rome, like Flavus, the brother of Herman the Cheruscan, willingly went to war against their own tribes.¹⁰

Each late Roman elite unit joined with a sister unit, forming a *Doppeltruppe* to uphold morale through rivalry. The sister unit of the Regii, it seems, was the *auxilium* of the Batavi, for Ammianus Marcellinus says that the two units fought side-by-side in the Battle of Strasburg: *celeri cursu Batavi venere cum Regibus*. The *auxilia* of the Regii (Reges) and Batavi are also paired in the eastern court army list of the Notitia Dignatarum.¹¹ Heading

⁸For *auxilia* of foot soldiers, see Th. Mommsen, *Gesammelte Schriften*, VI (Berlin, 1910), 239. For Alamanni, see *Paneg. Lat.* 6.6.4: *Quid immanem ex diversis Germanorum [= Alemanni] populis multitudinem, quam duratus gelu Rhenus inlexerat ut in insulam, quam divortio sui idem annis amplectitur, pedestri agmine ausa transmittere repente laxato flumine clauderetur et dimissis statim obsessa navigiis ita se dedere cogeretur ut, quod difficilius est, sorte communi eligeret ex se quos captivitati traderet, relatura cum reliquiis suis infamiam proditionis suorum; see L. Schmidt, *Die Westgermanen* (Munich, 1940), 248 [28]. A speech to the emperor needed not toe the line of the soldiers' feelings: see Synesius, *Reg.* 12–14. On tribes choosing warriors: Dio 71.16; Dexippus frag. 24 Müller = *FGrHist*, II, A, 100, frag. 7 Jacoby; Speidel, *Roman Army Studies*, I, 117–48 and 257; ibid., II, 71f; Zosimus 2.15.1; Ammianus 31.10.17—*oblata inventute valida*. G. Gottlieb and W. Kuhoff, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Alamannen*, VI (Heidelberg, 1984), 45, also suggest that Crocus and his troops joined Constantius in 298 (though as *foederati*).*

⁹On the Carpi, see Lactantius, *De. mort.* 38; M. P. Speidel, *Riding for Caesar: The Roman Emperors' Horse Guard* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994), 74f (they guarded Daia, not Galerius). On Franks, see Ammianus 17.2: *ad comitatum Augusti sunt missi*; Libanius, *Or.* 18.70, and Ammianus 20.8.13: *miscendos Gentilibus atque Scutariis—ex dediticis*.

¹⁰For ongoing native recruitment, see Mommsen, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 279. On the Alamannic king in Britain: Ammianus 29.4.7; cf. the Frank Mallobaudes, *comes domesticorum* and *rex Francorum* (Ammianus 31.10.6). On German leaders called "kings" even when serving as Roman officers: A. Demandt, "Arminius und die frühgermanische Staatenbildung," in *Arminius und die Varusschlacht*, ed. R. Wiegels and W. Waxer (1995), 186–96, esp. 188. On Alamanni in Roman service: K. F. Strohecker, *Germanentum und Spätantike* (Zürich, 1965), 30–53. For Flavus: Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.9f. For Germans fighting their own tribes: O. Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1897), 207; A. Alföldi, "Die ethnische Grenzscheide am römischen Limes," *Schweizer Beiträge zur allgemeinen Geschichte* 8 (1950), 37–50; E. Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1970), 166; E. A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians* (Madison, Wis., 1982), 232ff. On Persians doing the same, see *PLRE*, s.v. "Hormisdas 2."

¹¹On paired units: Ritterling, "Legio," 1350; On morale: M. P. Speidel, *The Framework of an Imperial Legion* (Caerleon, U.K., 1992), 33; idem, *Riding for Caesar*, 60 and 73. On rivalry: Priscus frag. 49 Blockley—*es philotimian*. On Strasburg: Ammianus 16.12.45; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 65, suggested changing the text

the eastern list, the Batavi and Regii, moreover, are some of the oldest *auxilia*; indeed, Constantius may have raised the *auxilium* of the Batavi in 298–299, the same year that he raised the Regii. These “Batavi” are likely to be Franks who lived in the former country of the Batavians. Frankish Batavi and Alamannic Regii make fitting counterparts since Franks and Alamanni were the two main nations facing Rome across the Rhine.¹²

Raised first by Maximian and Constantius, the *auxilia palatina* were a new class of units. This is borne out by their internal structure. Their under-officers’ ranks were not the traditional centurion and *optio*, but *circitor*, *bearchus*, *centenarius*, and *ducenarius*. For centuries to come, this rank order belonged to the newly raised palatine troops only—*Scholae*, *vexillationes*, and *auxilia palatina*. Late Roman *auxilia* thus were raised as palatine units to strengthen the court armies. For infantry *auxilia*, service in the elite forces was indeed new, for the imperial foot guard had until then lacked units of foreigners, it having consisted only of praetorians and elite legionary detachments. As cavalrymen, outlanders joined the guard sooner: Mauri and Osrhoeni *auxilia* (of unknown structure) had become part of the imperial field army by the early third century.¹³

II. IOVII CORNUTI AND BATAVI: *AUXILIA PALATINA* ON THE DANUBE AND IN THE EAST

Did Maximian and Constantius share their new western palatine *auxilia* with Diocletian in the East? Did elite troops from the Rhine also win Diocletian’s battles on the Danube, Euphrates, and Nile? Scholars have disputed this,¹⁴ but a gravestone set in 356 at Nacolea in Phrygia has now settled the matter. It mentions a numerous *Io(viorum)* *Corn(utorum)*.¹⁵ These Cornuti in Asia Minor are not the *auxilium* of Cornuti known during the same year to have been on the Rhine frontier, hence there existed at least two *auxilia* of Cornuti.¹⁶ What is more, Diocletian honored the eastern unit with the title “Iovii,” drawn from his dynastic name, Iovius. A passage by Aurelius Victor (Caes. 39.15) has been overlooked in this context. He says:

from *Regibus* to *Erlis*, but clearly our *auxilium* is meant, for it fights together with three other *auxilia*: see R. Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung* (Berlin, 1920), 37; Zuckerman, “Les ‘Barbares’ romains,” 19; In the Notitia: Or. 5.49 and 6.49; the Notitia shows no *Regii auxilium* in the western armies. There the Batavi got a new partner, the Heruli (Ammianus 20.1.3 and 20.4.2 of A.D. 359–360, also 27.8.7). The Regii thus seem to have gone east in 358–359: Julian, *Ad. Ath.* 280D; cf. Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 206. Ammianus’ *Reges* (instead of *Regii*) is echoed by Procopius, *Wars* 5.23.

¹²On the raising of the *Batavi auxilium*: Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 156f; see also Zosimus 3.8. Julian recruited Batavi (“Inhabitants of Batavia”) as late as 356, when certainly there were no more Batavians, only Franks, living in Batavia. The Batavi of *IG* 10.2.1 are the horse guard, not the *auxilium*: see below, note 21. The legion of the Regii of Not. Dig. Oc. 5.229—perhaps derived from our *auxilium*, though there are no parallels, save perhaps the Honoriani Felices Gallicani of Not. Dig. Oc. 5.247—might be the unit of Optata’s husband: see Tomlin, “Seniores-Juniores,” 270. On Franks and Alamanni, see Constantine’s coins of 315, with the legend FRAN ET ALAM: *Roman Imperial Coinage*, VII, Ticinum 28, and p. 728ff.

¹³On rank order: Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 79. On Mauri and Osrhoeni: *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae*, 3.2.1570; Speidel, *Roman Army*, I, 135f, 146f.

¹⁴For Diocletian’s use of Maximianic *auxilia*: Mommsen, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 240f; Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte*, 42; Th. Drew-Bear, “A Fourth-Century Latin Soldier’s Epitaph at Nakolea,” *HSCP* 81 (1977), 273. Against this use: Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 170.

¹⁵On Iovii Cornuti in 356: Drew-Bear, “Fourth-Century Latin Soldier’s Epitaph,” 257–74, whence *AEpigr* 1977, 806. The imperial title before, rather than after, the unit’s name is paralleled by the Honoriani of Not. Dig. Oc. 5.197ff, differing from those of Oc. 7. *Iovia* is shortened to *Iov.* in *AEpigr* 1990, 868.

¹⁶For Cornuti in the West in 355, see Ammianus 15.5.30; in 357, Ammianus 16.11.9; 16.12.43; 16.12.63.

*Huic postea cultu numinis Herculio cognomentum accessit, uti Valerio Iovium; unde etiam militari-
bus auxiliis longe in exercitu[m] praestantibus nomen impositum.*

[Maximian] later got the surname Herculius from his worship of the god, as Valerius [Diocletian] got the name Iovius. From it, some auxiliary units that greatly stood out in the army also got this name.

The passage was thought to refer to legions,¹⁷ but Victor clearly speaks of *auxilia*, and the Nacolea inscription proves him right. Their title, Iovii, shows that these Cornuti fought in Diocletian's field army, or else they would not have been honored with his title. Under Diocletian, then, a unit of Cornuti came from the Rhine, where they had been recruited,¹⁸ to serve with the senior emperor on the Danube and in the East. If an auxilium of Cornuti came east, other units may have done the same. That this was indeed the case is shown by an inscription dated 15 July 303, from near Brigetio on the Danube, mentioning Batavi:

*I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo).
Aur(elius) Ian-
uarius, t(ribunus) Bat(avorum) v(ir) p(erfectissimus), dux,
p(ro) s(alute) s(ua) v(otum) m(erito) l(ibens) s(olvit).
Dd(ominis) nn(ostris) VIII et VII Augg(ustis) co(n)suls(ulibus)
die Id(uum) Iul(iarum).¹⁹*

In the summer of 303, Diocletian was on his way from Sirmium to Rome.²⁰ He is likely to have come to Brigetio and the *auxilium* of the Batavi may well have been part of his escort. The horse guardsmen of the *equites singulares Augusti*, at times also called Batavi, are not likely to be meant here, for under Diocletian their name was *Comites domini nostri*.²¹ Diocletian thus had with him an *auxilium* of Batavi. Raised on the lower Rhine, it was now part of the Danubian field army.²²

¹⁷ Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 215. The auxilium of the Iovii cannot be meant, for there are no Herculii to match, and it is too far down the list of Not. Dig. Oc. 5 to be *longe in exercitu praestans* or to merit consideration by Aurelius Victor.

¹⁸ Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 132ff (his detailed account of the recruitment is not addressed seriously by Zuckerman, "Les 'Barbares' romains"); see also Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 145ff, 170; A. Alföldi, "Cornuti: A Teutonic Contingent in the Service of Constantine the Great and Its Decisive Role in the Battle at the Milvian Bridge," *DOP* 13 (1959), 169–83, was wrongly rejected by R. Grigg, "Inconsistency and Lassitude: The Shield Emblems of the *Notitia Dignitatum*," *JRS* 74 (1984), 133–42, esp. 134, based on a mistaken belief that the shield badges of the *Notitia Dignitatum* were "fabrications." Contra: Speidel, *Roman Army*, II, 418. A further demonstrably authentic shield badge in the *Notitia* is that of the *Domestici* (Or. 15); imperial busts also mark the shield of the erstwhile *comes domesticorum* Stilicho: see R. Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Leipzig, 1929), 247.

¹⁹ Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns, 3.699; see above, note 12.

²⁰ T. D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), 56.

²¹ On *comites*: Speidel, *Roman Army*, II, 379f; *Sancti Christophori martyris acta graeca antiqua*, AB 1 (1882), 121–48, attesting the *comites* guard for Diocletian's Egyptian campaign in 302; see D. Woods, "St. Christopher, Bishop Peter of Attalia, and the Cohors Marmaritarum: A Fresh Examination," *Vigiliae Christianae* 48.2 (1994), 170–86. It is tempting to see, along with Zuckerman ("Les 'Barbares' romains"), the *auxilium* of the Batavi in an inscription of 268 (*IG* 5.2.1, no. 151 = M. P. Speidel, *Die Denkmäler der Kaiserreiter* [Cologne, 1994], no. 75a; cf. idem, *Riding for Caesar*, 72 and 102), only thirty years before new-type *auxilia* became known. Yet, the Batavi horse guard is cavalry, and the *auxilia* are foot. The *vexillationes palatinæ* of the *equites Batavi*, *Cornuti*, *Bracchiati*, on the other hand, belong, as their names show, to the new-type *auxilia* (Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 195), even though they join the class of the old horse guard regiments of the *comites* and *promoti*.

²² Whether the tribune Aurelius Ianuarius himself was a "Batavian" Frank is uncertain, and so is the claim that he was the first known German of the rank of a Roman general: A. Demandt, *Die Spätantike* (Munich,

Why then do the early *auxilia palatina* all hail from the west and none from the Danube? Why were some of them sent east? There was no lack of elite foreign troops raised on the Danube. When in 271 Aurelian had worsted the Vandals, he first sent the bulk of his army from the Danube to Italy, then followed with the horse guard, the praetorians, and two thousand treaty-bound Vandal horsemen. He thus used the Vandals as a guard corps. In 298 Maximian raised *auxiliarii* from the Goths on the lower Danube for his field army against the Parthians. Likewise, in 324, Goths under their own prince fought on Licinius' side in the eastern army.²³ Danubian Germans thus contributed comparable troops, and the fact that some western *auxilia palatina* were brought to the Danube does not in itself prove westerners better fighters;²⁴ troops may have gone east for political reasons, as did the Franks whom Julian caught in 357. Perhaps, then, Danubian and eastern nations are lacking among the known early *auxilia palatina* merely because Constantine, by winning against Licinius in 316/7 and 324, established his own western units as the empire's permanent palatine forces. Perhaps they are lacking on the Danube also because, under conservative Diocletian, the legion was the preferred type of unit, even for warriors with highly specialized fighting techniques such as the Mattiobarbuli, who fought with lead-weighted darts.²⁵

Irregular German troops from the Rhine had joined the Roman army and the emperors' guard since the days of Caesar in ever-growing numbers.²⁶ Now, however, they gave rise to a new class of units, the *auxilia palatina*. Although there were—naturally—forerunners,²⁷ no *auxilia palatina* are known from the time before Maximian and Constantius; and with the Regii now datable to Constantius' reign, it becomes clear that raising the *auxilia palatina*—and some of the corresponding *vexillationes palatinæ*—was a new, all-out effort to strengthen the Roman field army. Tellingly, the framework for the new troops was the guard—in the wider sense of the word, which includes the palatine units—the branch of the army whose importance had steadily grown.²⁸ It was as a guard

1989), 55 and 268; idem, "Der spätrömische Militäradel," *Chiron* 10 (1980), 609–34, esp. 610. Ianuarius' title, *dux*, suggests that he was entrusted with a large-scale military task at Brigetio: see M. Christol, "Un duc dans une inscription de Termessos (Pisidie)," *Chiron* 8 (1978), 529–40, esp. 534f. Another *tribunus Batavorum*, Aurelius Ampelius, on an inscription from Mediana near Naissus (*AEpigr* 1982, 842), may belong to the same period.

²³On Vandals: Dexippus frag. 24 Müller = *FGrHist*, II, A, 100, frag. 7 Jacoby. Goths of Maximian: Iordanes, *Get.* 21.110. On Licinius: Anon. *Vales.* 27.

²⁴Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 140. There is no doubt, however, that *auxilia* were the West's best troops; witness Constantius II's demand for them: Ammianus 20.4.2.

²⁵On Franks, see above, note 9. Other western troops could likewise end up in the East for political reasons, e.g., *ala Francorum*, *cohors Alamannorum*, *cohors Chamavorum* (Not. Dig. Or. 31.51, 61, 63); for *ala Vandilorum* (Not. Dig. Or. 28.25), see Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 149; Speidel, *Roman Army*, I, 139. On Mattiobarbuli, see Vegetius 1.17; F. Altheim, *Niedergang der Alten Welt*, II (Frankfurt, 1952), 123; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer*, 217 (though they were not "irregulars").

²⁶Caesar: *BG* 7.13.1, see Speidel, *Riding for Caesar*, 12f and passim; idem, *Roman Army*, II, 89–104; Demandt, *Die Spätantike*, 268. Marius, too, seems to have had a German bodyguard; on his Bardyai (Plutarch, *Marius*, 43), see B. Scardigli and P. Scardigli, *Germani in Italia* (Rome, 1994), 134.

²⁷*Ingentia Germanorum auxilia* served under Postumus and Victorinus (HA, *Tyr. Trig.* 6.2): see J. Werner, "Bemerkungen zur mitteldeutschen Skelettgräbergruppe Hassleben-Luna," *Festschrift für Walter Schlesinger*, I (1973), 1–30. For Frankish *auxilia* with Aurelian in the war against Zenobia in A.D. 273: Hieronymous, *Chron.* a. 273; A. Demandt, "The Osmosis of Late Roman and Germanic Aristocracies," in *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, ed. E. K. Chrysos and A. Schwarcz (Vienna, 1989), 75–85, esp. 78. See also, Speidel, *Roman Army*, II, 101.

²⁸See, e.g., Julian, *Or.* 1.5A; also Speidel, *Riding for Caesar*, 10, 75f, 158.

officer that Crocus of the Regii became kingmaker at Constantius' court, and the new troops were pointedly called *palatinae*, "palace units."

Under Constantine, Western *auxilia* strode from victory to victory, conquering Rome, the Danubian armies, and the whole empire.²⁹ Thereafter, they fared well for a long time to come. They leap to the eye from the troop lists of the Notitia Dignatatum and from the pages of Ammianus Marcellinus. Two-headed shield badges and two-horned helmets on the Arch of Constantine bear out Libanius' and Zosimus' claim that Constantine conquered Rome (and overthrew its religion) with an army of German warriors, much to the distress of the traditional-minded.³⁰

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²⁹See e.g., Ammianus 15.5.33: *Boniti—Franci quidem, sed pro Constantini partibus in bello civili acriter contra Licinianos saepe versatus; also Roman Imperial Coinage*, VII, Siscia 29 and 30—*Virtus exercitus Gall(icanus)*.

³⁰Libanius, *Or.* 30.6; Zosimus 2.15.1. It is true that Libanius and Zosimus hated Constantine as an enemy of Greek and Roman religion. It is also true that political and religious enemies were widely branded as barbarians (or as helped by barbarians): see M. P. Speidel, "A Horse Guardsman in the War between Licinius and Constantine," *Chiron* 25 (1995), 83–87. But (contra Zuckerman, "Les 'Barbares' romains," 17) the Germanic character of Constantine's army rests not only on Zosimus' saying so—see also Porphyrius, Poem 18, 9f: *Rhenus tibi germinat exul agmina, telorum subeant qui murmure bella;* also see Ammianus 15.5.33, and, in general, Th. Mommsen, *Römische Kaisergeschichte* (Munich, 1992), 529. On Constantine's arch: H. P. L'Orange, *Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens* (Leipzig, 1939); A. Alföldi, "Ein spätrömisches Schildzeichen keltischer oder germanischer Herkunft," *Germania* 19 (1935), 324–28; Alföldi, "Cornuti."